

FALL, 2023 | SERMON ON THE MOUNT
Life Group WORKSHEET
Week 4 - “Distinctive Character” | Matthew 5:33-48 | Pastor Jon Potes

INTRODUCTION

The title for this week's sermon and discussion material is “Radically Distinctive: Distinctive Character.” In His sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives His people His vision for how they should live.

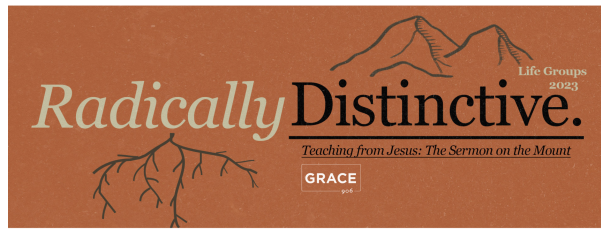
What characteristics should personify a Christ follower?

In this week's lesson, Jesus tells us how He wants His people to be identified. The English term “radical” comes from the Latin word “radix,” which means “at the root.” Later in His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus introduces us to the parable of “The Wise and Foolish Builders.” Christians are radical when they build their lives on the Solid Rock. He neatly summarizes why it is so important that Christians listen and obey His words.

Read Matthew 7:24-27:

24 “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, yet it did not fall because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

As believers, we must find our identity in Christ when life is easy... or when the chips seem stacked against us. In his sermon on Sunday, Pastor Jon said, “When your behavior doesn’t match your identity, there are consequences.” This week's session will explore what a life built on Christ looks like, especially when storms come.



Introductory Question: *When you observe other believers around you and the pressure is really on, how do they respond?*

DISCUSSION BODY

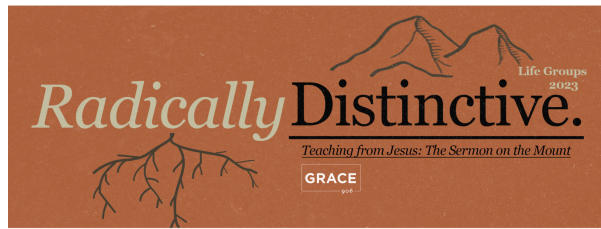
(Before meeting, please read through Matthew 5:1 - 7:29.)

Read Matthew 5:33-48:

33 "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil. 38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

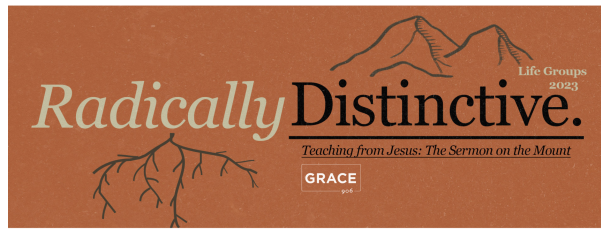
1. (a) *Why do you think people make such bold statements, such as, "I swear to God" or "I swear on my mother's grave?"*

1. (b) *Why do you think Jesus doesn't want His church to make such oaths?*



2. *Restate in your own words what you think Jesus means by, “Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No;’ anything more than this comes from evil.” (Matthew 5:37)*
3. (Matthew 5:38-42) In these verses, Jesus is dealing with the issue of retaliation. Leviticus 24:17-23 talks about “an eye for an eye.” The intent of the law was not for people to personally exact revenge. They needed to trust God that He would carry out justice. The law was to protect the weak from the strong.

What is difficult about trusting God when you have been insulted or intentionally wronged?
4. *Do you think the teachers of the law were wrongly applying the principle of “an eye for an eye?”*
5. (Matthew 5:39) Jesus again uses hyperbole (an exaggeration to make a point). *What did Jesus mean by that statement?*
6. (Matthew 5:43) *Does this sound like the commandment you are familiar with?* (Jesus is referring to Leviticus 19:18.)
How is this text different from what the teachers of the law taught the people?
7. In one of Jesus’ parables, He aimed to help us better understand who is considered a neighbor.
In Luke 10:25-37, how does Jesus answer the question, “Who is my neighbor?”
8. *How would you summarize what Jesus is saying in Matthew 5:44-47?*
If you want to be like Jesus, how should you treat your enemies?



9. (Matthew 5:46-48) *Referencing verses 46-47, how are believers to be radically distinctive?*

CONCLUSION

Jesus is addressing the condition of the heart for his believers as compared to the outward facade. It's important to remember that the condition of the heart will manifest itself in our outward actions.